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ABSTRACT

A study examined the level of coordination exhibited by six Ohio communities (Evergreen, Avon Center, Central City, Douglasville, Frostburg, and Buckeye) in planning and delivering training services to workers dislocated because of plant closings. Information was obtained from a wide variety of documents and reports as well as from Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and Community Economic Assistance Team (CEAT) staffs, job training professionals, school and union officials, representatives of closed businesses, displaced workers, local service delivery area (SDA) and Private Industry Council (PIC) staff, and private outplacement firms. The following recommendations resulted from the case studies: (1) SDAs, PICs, and secondary and postsecondary vocational-technical institutions alike should be more assertive in marketing their services to the business community and in encouraging businesses to provide advance notice of impending plant closures; (2) one of the first tasks of any community facing a plant closure is to establish a single steering committee to plan and coordinate all aspects of a dislocated worker program; and (3) wherever possible, dislocated workers should be hired to assist in the delivery of services. (MN)

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Ohio Council on Vocational Education
1988

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FOREWORD

For most people, a job is more than just a way to make a living. It is also a critical factor in determining one's quality of life and sense of self-worth.

Today, many Ohioans have been trapped by conditions beyond their control — conditions that prevent them from holding a job. For some, those conditions are the state's rapidly changing economic structures. For others, they are the limitations of the networks that deliver a broad range of education and human services in Ohio.

The gravity of this situation becomes most serious when communities experience the closure of a manufacturing plant and its service-related industries. Hence, it is critically important that communities — and more generally, the State of Ohio — enhance their capability to respond to plant closing crises.

The need for this study was recognized by members of the Ohio Council on Vocational Education (OCOVE) and the Council's staff who participated in the deliberations of the Secondary/Postsecondary Vocational Work Group of the Ohio Job Training Coordinating Council. This Work Group recommended that such a study be conducted.

Commissioned by OCOVE and conducted by Sally Van Meter, this study focused on communities' efforts — and those of Ohio's Service Delivery Areas (SDAs), Private Industry Councils (PICs), and vocational and higher education institutions — to respond to the needs of dislocated workers. This report identifies how communities are presently responding to plant closings, and how they are determining what types of services to provide and how to coordinate those services.

The recommendations presented here offer the outline of a model program — one that possibly can be used by other communities facing similar situations to develop and carry out appropriate response strategies. This "model" should permit them to "hit the ground running" and to make use of strategies that have already been proven effective. It also should allow them to make the best use of the available vocational/higher education resources.

The Council expresses its appreciation to each of the individuals at the sites and to those at the state level with whom interviews were conducted in the course of this study.

Joseph L. Davis

Dr. Joseph L. Davis
Executive Director

Mary E. Purcell

Mary E. Purcell
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The state's rapidly changing economic structures and job demands are creating conditions that prevent many citizens from holding jobs. The gravity of this situation becomes most serious when communities experience the closing of a manufacturing plant and its service-related industries. Hence, it is critically important that communities -- and more generally, the State of Ohio — enhance their capability to respond to plant closing crises.

This study focused on the level of coordination exhibited by six communities -- each of which had faced the challenge of plant closings. It examined how they planned and delivered services to dislocated workers. The findings and recommendations of the study are the outgrowth of both positive and negative experiences identified through case studies of the six communities and related interviews. They offer the outline of a model program — one that possibly could be used by other communities facing similar situations to develop and carry out appropriate response strategies.

Recommendations pertaining to three areas of concern follow in brief form:

A. Advance Notice and Early Intervention

A-1: SDAs, PICs, secondary and postsecondary vocational-technical institutions, and JTP-Ohio should be more assertive in "marketing" their services to the business community.

A-2: SDAs, PICs, secondary and postsecondary vocational-technical institutions, and JTP-Ohio should be more assertive in encouraging businesses to provide advance notice of impending plant closures.

A-3: Once notice of a plant closure has been given, initial orientation sessions and the provision of retraining and out-placement services should begin as soon as possible — before the plant is closed.

A-4: Initial services should be provided on-site, if possible; and spouses and other family members should be included in the informational meetings.

B. Planning and Coordinating Community Responses

B-1: One of the first tasks of any community facing a plant closing should be to establish a single Steering Committee to plan and coordinate all aspects of a dislocated worker program.

B-2: The Steering Committee should choose a program administrator who has lead responsibility for evaluating, selecting and developing an effective service delivery mechanism for the program.

B-3: All assessment and survey activities should be conducted with a professionally designed and tested research instrument.

C. Implementation Strategies

C-1: Wherever possible, dislocated workers should be hired to assist in the delivery of services.

C-2: Services should be offered in convenient locations and in environments that do not intimidate workers.

C-3: The Steering Committee should be actively involved in reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the program.

C-4: Mechanisms should be developed to maintain continuing contact with dislocated workers.

C-5: Services should be available for a full year after the closing of the plant.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study focused on the level of coordination exhibited by six communities -- each of which had faced the challenge of plant closings. It examined how they planned and delivered services to dislocated workers. Additionally, the study tried to determine whether the level of planning improved a community's ability to offer a creatively tailored program of retraining and employment services.

Sites selected for the study were based on discussions with the Community Economic Assistance Team (CEAT), JTP-Ohio, and Ohio Council on Vocational Education (OCOVE) staff. Two sites were partially researched before it was determined that not enough information was available to provide a good site profile. However, some of the information that was obtained from those two sites has been included in the findings and recommendations of this report.

With one exception, the sites selected for this study had experienced a plant or business closing one or more years earlier. This time gap permitted the identification of all planning activities and most of the services delivered. In addition, this ensured that the research would not disrupt the communities' efforts, nor would it affect the results of those efforts. "Positioning" the study in this way, however, did provide an opportunity to ask individuals about how they would have done things differently, given their subsequent experiences.

The information provided in this report was obtained from (1) a wide variety of documents and reports, including newspaper and magazine stories, locally-generated studies, state and local Title III* administrative documents, and reports on Title III programs; and (2) interviews with JTPA and CEAT staffs, job training professionals, education officials (vocational schools, two- and four-year colleges), union officials, representatives of the closed businesses, displaced workers, local SDA and PIC staff, and private outplacement firms.

*Title III of the Job Training Partnership Act provides services for dislocated workers. Dislocated workers are defined as those persons who are unemployed because of plant closings or other incidents beyond their control, and who have no hope of returning to their former jobs.

In addition to interviews with persons involved at particular sites, interviews were conducted with individuals who had a broader based knowledge of dislocated worker programs throughout Ohio. These interviews were conducted in order to obtain a broader understanding of the problems that each site faced, as well as to provide a way to gauge the information obtained in the individual site interviews.

Interviews stressed the following issues:

- What plans were made for the coordination of employment and training services?
- How was the planning organized and structured?
- What agencies were involved in planning the service?
- Which agency provided leadership?
- How were decisions made relative to the provision of services and training?
- What worked well — and what didn't?
- What would the community do differently, if faced with the situation again?
- What guidelines can be developed to help employment and training agencies in other communities prepare for future plant closings?

THE JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT: THE CHALLENGE OF TITLE III

The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) was passed by Congress on October 13, 1982. Title I of this act required the division of each state into Service Delivery Areas (SDAs), each with its own Private Industry Council (PIC). Programs were also established for training the disadvantaged (Title II), and for providing employment and training assistance for dislocated workers (Title III).

In partnership with local governments, PICs are to provide guidance and oversight for activities pertaining to their job training plan. More specifically, PICs must determine procedures for the development of job training plans and the selection of grant recipients.

The law requires that:

1. The primary consideration in selecting agencies or organizations to deliver services within a SDA is the agency's effectiveness in the delivery of service based on performance: meeting performance goals, quality and cost of training, and characteristics of participants.

2. Proper consideration must be given to community-based organizations and education agencies.

3. Funds cannot be used to duplicate area-based facilities/services, unless it can be demonstrated that they would be more likely to achieve the SDA's performance goals.

4. PICs must determine what job opportunities exist for retrained dislocated workers. Title III money can be used to assist individuals in obtaining employment through:

   - job search assistance, including job clubs;
   - job development;
   - job skills training;

- supportive services such as commuting assistance and financial and individual counseling;
- pre-layoff assistance;
- relocation assistance; and
- programs, in cooperation with employers and/or labor organizations, to provide assistance prior to plant closings.

The Act appropriates 75% of its dislocated worker funds to the states by formula, while the Secretary of the Department of Labor retains 25% as a discretionary fund. This money is distributed to the governors based on mass layoffs, natural disasters, actions by the federal government, high unemployment, or designated enterprise zones. This federal money must be matched with public or private funds or in-kind services.

Through the enactment of JTPA, the federal government tried to provide a more systematic approach to service delivery at the local level, by entrusting the coordination and linkage of the various programs to the PICs. The law requires: (1) strong business participation at the PIC level in the planning and management of JTPA programs; (2) comprehensive planning and coordination beyond JTPA at the state and local levels; and (3) broad representation of business, labor, employment and training professionals, and elected officials.

Unfortunately, the law has given PICs little more than the force of their persuasive powers to accomplish this delicate task. Given the divisions that persist at the local level, relatively few have chosen to accept this challenge. As TRW's Dr. Pat Choate observes in a monograph prepared for the Northeast-Midwest Institute, the nation's employment and training policies, programs, and organizations are "unprepared to support the renewal of the economy." Choate continues by suggesting that the employment and training systems operate "independent of each other, producing massive fragmentation, duplications, omissions, misplaced priorities and waste."

SIX CASE STUDIES

On the following pages are the six case studies upon which the findings and recommendations of this study are based. All of the information gathered in the interviews was obtained with the understanding that it would not be attributed to its source. Therefore, the specific communities and the closed businesses that were the focus of this study are not identified here. Instead, pseudonyms were used to identify the six communities that have been studied.

Under the "Assessment" section of each case study, the researcher has presented both positive and negative aspects and outcomes of the respective dislocated worker training programs.

CASE STUDY #1: EVERGREEN

On December 31, 1986, a large company in Evergreen, which is one of Ohio's largest metropolitan communities, closed its doors and relocated its operations to another state. Approximately 135 hourly workers—most of whom were union members—were affected by this plant closing.

The affected employees had worked for the company for an average of ten years. Most had only a high school education, and some were in need of remedial education. Some had been working for $5 to $6 per hour, although most were making from $10 to $17 an hour. They knew they were working in a field that offered few employment opportunities, and they did not want to relocate outside of Evergreen.

For many of the employees, they were losing the only job they had ever held. They were losing jobs in a working environment that offered a comfortable, family atmosphere. In fact, many employees had family members working at the plant.

Layoffs began in November, 1986—three months after company officials had contacted a vocational guidance agency, which was affiliated with the local United Way organization, and had requested help in setting up a placement-oriented program for its employees. The agency had been able to put together a package of services, funded in part by Title III monies, that would be available for a year.

The agency's package was very attractive from a cost perspective. Title III funding was requested in September, and the package was approved by the three labor unions that represented the affected workers. These unions were involved in the development of the out-placement program provided for the workers.

As the lay-offs began, employees were given verbal notice of dismissal by the company. The vocational guidance agency, which was given space at the plant, set up a half dozen meetings to provide the employees with information about its programs. The unions had obtained paid time-off for the workers to attend the meetings, although only about 80 did so. Many of the workers had very negative feelings about the lay-offs.

The company provided the service provider with a list of names and addresses of all the employees that were laid off so that contact could be maintained even after the plant closed. Of the 135 employees laid off through December 1986, it was estimated that 35 would not want to re-enter the labor force and would not require job placement assistance.

The provider received $150,000 in state Title III funds on December 8, 1986. Of this total, $90,114 was in-kind services from the agency and OBES.

The service provider had previously operated two Title III programs and had formal linkages

with many service providers in the community. Its Title III programs were monitored by a statewide supervisor and its Business Advisory Council, comprised of Ohio corporations, provided technical guidance and information regarding local labor markets.

The service provider estimated that it would be able to secure employment for 70 of the 100 dislocated workers (70 percent) at a cost of $1,500 per person. It projected that their hourly wage would be $5.00 per hour. The program was initiated on February 1, 1987, and 119 of 135 laid-off workers eventually signed up for service. Of those, two started their own businesses.

With the assistance of OBES, the service provider was responsible for the intake, eligibility determination and recruitment of all the affected employees. It actively referred individuals to the appropriate agencies for counseling, whether it was family, credit, substance abuse, or whatever. It also referred individuals to various remedial education programs and even found individuals to do signing for those workers who were deaf. A job fair was held on-site so the workers could be interviewed by interested employers.

The following services were provided:

February:	Program orientation; career interest and values inventory completed; individual meetings with job placement specialist; additional career counseling scheduled as needed.
March:	Skills assessment used to determine the most appropriate services for each participant; week-long group session conducted, focusing on "job club" activities with a mock video-taped job interview and preparation of an up-to-date resume; employers made presentations on the current job market.
May-December:	Continous job placement assistance and job club programs offered.

Each worker's employment development plan was reviewed monthly until re-employment was achieved. The following considerations were made available to each individual: free counseling services, relocation funds (up to $700, in-state only), on-the-job training funds (up to $1,500), and travel reimbursement for job interviews within 25 miles of the worker's residence (21 cents per mile).

Assessment

Evergreen's dislocated workers' program received mixed reviews from local participants. To its credit, the company recognized the importance of early intervention and directed its staff to identify a service provider that would provide a one-year program of services. Once the lay-off announcement was made, the company facilitated weekly meetings with workers—until the plant closed—in order to maintain communication and encourage participation in out-placement programs.

In addition, the severance pay provided by the company was sufficient to help most workers meet their basic needs through April or May—fully four months after the December closing.

On a less positive note, interviews with program participants identified several problems:

- Once the plant closed, workers had to travel to the service provider's headquarters, which was inconveniently located and thus discouraged continued participation in the program.
- Many workers felt that they had been "left hanging" when several weeks passed between the announcement of the plant closing and the initiation of meetings with the service provider at the work site.
- Activity at the local level was fragmented. For example, the SDA did not know that the company was planning to close its plant. For weeks, it wasn't even aware of the company's contact with the service provider. Also, SDA officials report confusion when working in large metropolitan areas when more than one PIC or SDA share responsibility for a city or county. Finally, both SDA and PIC representatives indicated that they do not always understand Title III or JTP-Ohio priorities.
- Many companies are not aware that Title III funds are available to them through local, state and federal agencies. This appears to have been one of the factors that led the company in question to seek out the services of a single service provider, instead of turning to the public sector's dislocated worker network. This suggests the presence of a "marketing" problem—one which the public sector's dislocated worker network must endeavor to overcome.

CASE STUDY #2: AVON CENTER

In April, 1984, an iron foundry closed its doors in Avon Center, a small urban community. The closing of the area's largest employer resulted in the dislocation of approximately 600 workers —in a county where the unemployment rate was 10.6 percent, considerably higher than the state's unemployment rate of 7.5 percent.

Avon Center's dislocated workers averaged 48 years of age, had spent most or all of their working years at the foundry, and were reluctant to relocate. Unfortunately, there were few jobs available locally, since all of the other foundries in the community had ceased operating.

In late 1984, the workers decided to buy the company and run it as an Employee Stock Owned Plan (ESOP). Since a sophisticated combination of eight funding sources was needed to complete the transaction, it took approximately two years to put the buy-out together. During this period, the workers exhausted their unemployment benefits.

As the new company prepared to open in August, 1986, Avon Center's Community Action Organization (CAO) took the lead in identifying and obtaining as many training funds as possible. Training was needed to provide orientation programs, since the workers had been unemployed for two years. Training was particularly needed to help the workers make the transition from a traditional union-management organized plant to one owned and operated by unionized employees. Training was also needed to upgrade the workers' skills, methods and production techniques.

The CAO obtained $300,000 from JTPA Title III and Title II-A for on-the-job training (OJT), and management was able to secure $209,468 from the Ohio Department of Development's Ohio Industrial Training Program (OITP). JTPA federal funds were matched by combining the employees wage contributions ("sweat equity") with some of the OITP funds—for a total of $180,256.

The Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (OBES) provided the intake services and certified 303 workers as eligible for Title II and III funded programs. More specifically:

- JTPA funds provided income supplement payments of $15 per day to the workers, while they attended a four-week long orientation program at the plant site. These payments reimbursed the workers for mileage and expenses (i.e., meals, medical care, child care and work clothing) during the orientation program. The program focused on the new management structure and training philosophy; and provided an overview of an Employee Stock Owned Plan (ESOP), the role of management, employees, and the plant's board of directors. The program also provided information on plant restoration plans, marketing and sales information, financial expectations, and safety, health and personnel issues.
- A contract was signed with Avon Center's branch campus of a major university to provide the training program, with Ohio Industrial Training Program (OITP) staff, university faculty members and independent consultants serving as instructors.
- The orientation was scheduled to coincide with the workers' "sweat equity period." Each worker, in a non-pay status, contributed 160 hours toward the clean-up of the plant site so that it could again function as a foundry. The time spent in the orientation program was in addition to the 160 hours of work at the plant site.
- All 303 employees/owners certified as eligible by OBES put in their sweat equity. In contrast, only 160 of them received income support payments.
- The local university provided an eight hour, off-site assessment of workers' skills and abilities. Approximately 118 workers took part in five different tests, which enabled the foundry management to determine how to reduce the 178 job classifications to about 40 —and how to reduce 18 departments to 14. This reduction was achieved in order to provide the workers/management with greater flexibility.
- As a result of the reduction in classifications, the workers needed to up-grade their skills and to be cross-trained.
- The local university established and equipped a permanent classroom/training center at the plant site. This third phase of training—on-the-job-training (OJT)—used JTPA and OITP monies to help pay for a series of programs lasting six weeks. A 26-hour orien-

tation program covered the issues of the new management structure; management/labor philosophy; operation and manufacturing procedures; ESOP contract; and the role of employees, management, board of directors and stockholders in the ESOP. Later, a 14-hour program reviewed plant restoration, financial operations, marketing, sales strategies, personnel procedures and benefits, as well as work guidelines and classifications.

- Much of the training was a collaborative effort in which the plant managers identified and provided the classroom material, and the university staff edited and organized it for presentation.
- A series of employee manuals was developed. These included an Employee Handbook, a Statistical Process Control Manual, a Quality Assurance Handbook, and a Standard Practices Manual.
- Individuals were selected to undertake highly specialized and technical training to enable them to teach their fellow workers ("Train the Trainer"). This included 40 hours of instruction on quality assurance, 40 hours on statistical process control, and 10 hours on health and safety issues, as well as topics of interest to employees of a single department.
- Management has been able to identify suppliers who provide free training as it relates to changes in the marketplace. In some cases, workers have been trained with actual customers so that they can better understand their needs and can determine how the plan can meet those customer needs.

The major players in developing funding and training programs were the CAO (which houses the SDA), the local university, the plant management, and the CEAT and OITP staffs. The entire community was involved in Avon Center's effort to minimize the negative effects of the foundry's closing. Community support and leadership was strong and unwavering.

A great deal of care was taken to coordinate the flow of information. This clearly benefited the workers, but it also saved time and kept individual agency/institution identities from confusing the delivery of services. As reported by several local participants, meetings for the workers often included information from representatives of several agencies or institutions, without regard for "who got the credit for calling the meeting and/or paying for it."

One of the primary characteristics of Avon Center's response to the foundry closing was that most participants were guided by a concern that the needs of workers—not institutions or agencies—were met.

Assessment

Interviews with project participants confirmed that local leadership was the key to Avon Center's success. Representatives of local organizations worked well together. They kept duplication of effort to a minimum and functioned creatively—always willing to consider multiple courses of action. "Turf" issues were usually avoided as groups worked together to provide services to the community's dislocated workers.

On the negative side, major time delays were experienced in those cases in which service providers were required to apply for funding from state or federal officials. They also indicated that some private sector participants were not enthusiastic about working with government agencies, since they felt hassled by such relationships and since some of the dollars that had been promised to support project efforts had not yet been paid. It should be added that local participants reported that contracts were awarded quickly in those situations in which the SDA made the decision and Title III funds were available.

CASE STUDY #3: CENTRAL CITY

One of the nation's largest footwear manufacturers closed a plant in January, 1985, laying off 270 workers in Central City, one of Ohio's largest metropolitan areas. Citing the effects of foreign competition, the manufacturer had reduced its Ohio workforce from 700 to approximately 270 during the preceding three years. In Central City, employment had been as high as 475, so the plant's closing culminated a decline that cost the community a substantial number of jobs.

The typical worker dislocated by this closing was a 45-year-old female with 12 years of experience with the company. She earned $7 an hour and had limited math and language skills. Sixteen of the company's workers did not speak English—adding to their less than bright re-employment prospects.

The plant's closing was not a surprise in that the employees knew that the manufacturer was experiencing financial problems. In fact, rumors of a possible closing had led local SDA representatives to contact the company and to initiate discussions about appropriate job training efforts.

A small group of people planned an assessment, career guidance and employability development program over a two month period. Those involved in the planning included representatives of the manufacturer, the local PIC, a community college and a publicly-funded research institute. Job training services were initiated in late February, 1985.

In this case, JTP-Ohio provided $306,309 through the state's Discretionary Title III funds to serve the 215 of the 270 workers who desired retraining. The company, the city, the county United Way and its affiliates, and the local PIC provided funds and in-kind contributions amounting to $128,630. These workers became eligible for Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA), which means that they received 26 additional weeks of unemployment insurance and $3,000 in retraining monies.

Once the plant closing was announced, staff, space, and time-off from work were made available so that workers could find out about job training options. Intake and orientation sessions were held in the plant cafeteria. OBES certified the workers for assistance under the JTPA Title III and the Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA). The workers also filled out an inventory survey during the orientation meetings.

Those interested in training and job out-placement assistance attended a community college for four two-hour sessions. A computerized career planning program was used, as well as materials for small group settings. Developed by the local research institute, these materials helped workers identify and discuss ways to transfer their skills to other jobs. Counselors focused small group discussions on a series of case studies. At the end of the two weeks, each client was expected to produce an employability development plan reflecting their decisions.

The local PIC acted as both the grant recipient and the administrative entity for the program. It conducted the intake and eligibility determination services, while Central City's community college provided the assessment, career guidance and employability development plan service for the workers. These services were composed of classroom training, on-the-job training and unsubsidized employment positions, job/training matching and worker placement.

According to Central City's PIC representatives, the employability development plans produced several benefits. Most importantly, they minimized public cost, assisted the local council in operating an effective program, and used career guidance and services consistent with the community college's enterprise-based education offerings.

OBES did the actual certification at the plant site. The company sent out notices to all the workers regarding various types of services. Eighty percent of the workers (215 out of 270) indicated they were interested in participating in skills retraining. The community college notified them when the assessment and orientation programs became available.

Services made available to the workers included (1) resume and job application preparation; (2) letter of reference/recommendation preparation; (3) career counseling; (4) stress management counseling; (5) resource counseling; (6) job search and interviewing instruction; (7) skills training; and (8) placement assistance. The bulk of these services were provided through the OBES' JTP-Ohio office at no cost to the grant.

According to local participants, two of the program components that proved most helpful were the provision of interpreters for those unable to speak English, which was handled by the SDA; and the availability of sound career counseling at the earliest possible time.

Training was available from a wide variety of sources within the community, with workers being able to choose from among such sources. Both the community college and the local research institute conducted independent reviews of worker satisfaction with the program.

Assessment

On the positive side, program participants identified two factors that benefited the program. First, the availability of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) dollars, in addition to Title III funds, allowed eligible dislocated workers to enroll in training programs. Second, Central City's growing economy permitted dislocated workers to be absorbed elsewhere. In all, project participants reported that 180 clients had found work elsewhere.

Yet, interviews with program participants tended to elicit a much larger number of negative comments—all of which re-inforce the view that Central City's program never really came to terms with where it was going or how it was going to get there. Most notably, these comments included the following:

- The initial assessment did not provide an accurate reading of several factors, including workers' financial capacity to take advantage of training opportunities.
- Program rules changed every month or so. As a result, there was considerable confusion about goals and objectives. Clients never understood their responsibilities, nor could they identify the organizations or people with whom they were interacting. Too often, they were unaware of available benefits. Ever-changing rules made solid planning impossible, and as a result, Title III funds were not used efficiently.
- Central City did not have a support system capable of helping workers deal with their anger and frustration. In addition, the program did not maintain contact with those workers. Today, Central City has a newsletter that keeps in contact with all potential workers for one year. This weekly publication provides support and information about available benefits.
- Services were provided for only six months. Most professional job training/education providers believe a program should be offered for at least one year.
- The grant was seriously underspent. One reason was that many workers did not have the resources needed to take advantage of classroom training. Also many employers chose to bypass the subsidies available through the OJT program, preferring to hire workers from the community's larger job pool. In part, this employment practice reflected the lower education and skill levels of the program's workers, and the difficulty of filling out the forms required for OJT employment.
- Service providers had to wait for months before receiving their money. And workers lost hope as the gap between promised action and performance became larger and larger.

CASE STUDY #4: DOUGLASVILLE

In June, 1985, the federal government announced plans to terminate a special project being carried out in Douglasville, Ohio. The project's termination resulted in the closing of a highly technical plant—and it cost the area 1,200 production and 800 construction jobs. The affected work force extended into three SDAs and eight counties in a fairly rural area. This area's unemployment rate ranged from 9.2 percent to 14.7 percent, compared to a statewide average of 8.5 percent.

Suspicions of a possible closing preceded the formal announcement by at least six months. So in early 1985, company officials visited a number of other companies to determine what kinds of arrangements might be made for an out-placement program. The company identified three options: (1) hire a professional agency to handle all out-placement activities; (2) develop a program to be implemented by the company; or (3) hire a local college to assist in this effort.

Company officials ultimately decided to combine their own internal staff and resources with those of Douglasville's community college. They determined that the out-placement program should include sessions on crisis management, financial counseling, resume writing, interview skills, and skills identification. They also decided to conduct a Job Fair at the end of the program.

Other steps taken during this initial period were as follows:

- Contact was made with all the colleges within a 100-mile radius, and one was chosen to provide services to the dislocated workers.
- An out-placement center was set up on-site where classes could be taught and counselors could work with the employees.
- The company encouraged its affiliate firms to hire its workers and began arranging transfers. In May, it invited workers to take part in voluntary reduction-in-force (VRIF) programs.
- When the June 5 announcement was made, the delivery of out-placement services was intensified.

Company representatives also selected some of their fellow employees to act as individual counselors. These counselors were trained by the university to look for jobs, provide employees with one-on-one assistance in the way of resume writing, and advise on interviewing techniques. Chosen for their broad understanding of plant and workers' skills, the counselors were consulted more often and provided more services than originally anticipated. The company eventually selected more worker/counselors because of their perceived effectiveness.

Introduced in early July, the university's out-placement programs ran through the middle of August. Thirty employees attended a set of three sessions covering the issues identified above. Written materials were provided and individual programs—on such topics as private financial planning, computer evaluation of current skills, and transfer to other jobs—were made available upon request. The university's participation ended at the end of these training sessions.

The company and the worker/counselors also organized a Job Fair. Companies attending the Job Fair received books of resumes in advance. Fifty-two companies scheduled over 800 interviews with 474 employees. In September, the out-placement office's major responsibility was to keep all job opportunities posted, keep all employees (laid off and working) informed about available jobs, and follow up with companies which received resumes. Individual worker/counselors continued to track the job search activities of assigned employees.

When the lay-offs began, the company terminated 25 workers a day. Each worker's last day was set aside for a briefing at the local union hall on the services available.

All of the PICs representing the affected SDAs agreed at the time of the announced closing that one of the local Community Action Organizations (CAOs) would serve as the administrative entity for this dislocated worker project. This CAO received a $50,000 grant from JTP-Ohio to design a JTPA grant application. From the date of its announced closing, the CAO was invited to attend all of the company's out-placement meetings and the Education/Retraining Fair, to enable it to gather the information needed to develop a set of worker profiles.

During the planning stage, weekly meetings were held involving the CAO, company management and union representatives. It was determined that state and local funding were not adequate to meet the emerging challenge, so an

application was made to the U.S. Secretary of Labor for a grant from the Discretionary Dislocated Workers' Fund. The CAO eventually received two grants: the first for $500,000, and a second for $432,629. The program was scheduled to end on June 30, 1988.

CAO officials estimated that approximately 920 workers would be eligible for assistance. Yet, the original funding was sufficient to provide services to only 235 people, while the second grant increased services to a total of about 435 workers. To date, the project has produced 835 certified eligible workers, and approximately 500 of them have taken part in the program—exceeding the funding provided.

Since most of the dislocated workers were highly educated (60 percent had served in management positions), the skills assessment program was particularly important. Given the area's relatively high unemployment rate, training was offered only in those situations where the potential for placement was documented. Of the training programs used, less-than-class-size was emphasized, since a wider variety of subject matter was available through courses from area providers—and because it was considerably less expensive to provide.

A number of other programs were also made available. A class was offered for those interested in developing their own business. Approximately 40 people took part in a class that lasted for an intensive quarter. Additionally, a university in the area offered tuition-free classes to dislocated workers who had already started course work before the plant closing.

Given the area's chronic unemployment, relocation became an important option for the majority of the workers. Relocation programs had been used in the past, since surveys had revealed that relocation was most effective for more-skilled workers. These surveys had also indicated that such workers were more receptive to relocation strategies.

The relocation program provided assistance to anyone willing to travel 45 miles or more for work, and for anyone willing to drive long distances to and from work on a daily basis. Relocation benefits included gas, motel and food allowances until workers received their first pay check.

Approximately 205 received relocation assistance. Some relocated on their own without assistance. Seventy percent of the Title III dollars went to relocation efforts and most of this money was used in the first six months.

Assessment

In most respects, Douglasville's project was a successful one. Local participants cite several factors that contributed to this success:

- SDA, company, and union officials worked well together—keeping each other fully informed about program activities. This internal communication commenced with a series of weekly planning meetings that began when the anticipated closing was announced.
- An effective network was established, involving all counties in the SDA. All participants agreed on how the dislocated worker program would be handled. Coordination was facilitated by the fact that all SDA programs, with one exception, were administered by Community Action Organizations (CAOs).
- All dislocated workers who started a two-year college program prior to termination were allowed to complete their education on a tuition-free basis.

On the negative side, participants reported that many community residents were troubled by the fact that 70 percent of all funds was used for relocation purposes. Given the nature of the closed facility's workforce, this is not surprising. Yet, it was not something that local residents found easy to accept—and it generated considerable antagonism and frustration within the community.

It should be noted that the closed plant has subsequently been reopened by another company. This has created new employment opportunities for approximately 100 workers, and it is possible that another 100 jobs may be created. This development has caused some problems for the dislocated workers' program, since it complicates program officials' efforts to maintain accurate records as the evaluation process continues.

CASE STUDY #5: FROSTBURG

When one of Frostburg's largest employers announced it was closing a local assembly plant, the community was shocked. The lay-offs, which by union contract were being announced at least six months in advance, were scheduled to begin in early 1987 and would continue through 1988. Ultimately, they would put 6,500 employees out of work, affecting the economy of a major city and multiple counties. And most ominously, each job loss was expected to affect two or three other jobs in related and/or supporting industries.

How has Frostburg responded to this situation? First, a non-profit corporation, hereafter referred to as the Center, has been established jointly by the union and the company. This non-profit corporation will act as the service provider. It will offer a wide variety of services to the dislocated workers for two years.

To support this undertaking, a joint management-union fund is expected to generate $3,694,000, while another $2,500,000 is expected to be available from OJT monies. In addition, the Center has applied for $2,661,000 from the U.S. Department of Labor's JTPA Title III Reserve Fund, to provide on-the-job training (OJT) programs and supportive and relocation services.

To date, centers established by this type of joint arrangement have achieved a 70% or better job placement rate, using a number of pre-layoff services. These services include on-the-job training, classroom training and direct placement.

The Center plans to provide a two phase program. Phase 1 has already provided pre-layoff intervention services, consisting of orientation, counseling, basic skill remediation, assessment and job market data. Ultimately, it is expected that 4,550 workers (70 percent) will receive these services. At this time, it is not expected that JTPA funds will be sought for this phase of the program.

Phase 2 will provide basic skills training, classroom training, OJT, relocation assistance, job search skills and placement services. It is expected that approximately 3,250 eligible dislocated workers (50 percent) will receive these services. It is hoped that 2,373 workers will be able to enter unsubsidized employment.

Pre-layoff services consist of the following (in order):

- Transition teams, consisting of union and salaried personnel, help in conducting outreach activities and eligibility determination, and in providing orientation information. Orientation information includes contractual rights, benefits, Center programs, Trade Adjustment Act (TRA) eligibility and benefits, unemployment insurance and JTPA benefits.
- In addition, a series of workshop sessions includes: discussions of potential sources of stress and issues surrounding the layoff, discussions focusing on the job market and job opportunities, completion of a family needs survey, and discussions on the range of individual and family support services that are needed based on the survey. Support services identified by the survey are used to plan and develop various programs.
- Career/personal counseling and guidance are offered to eligible workers. Sessions are offered either on or off the site, without pay, and consist of the following direct services:
  - Employment Development Plan (EDP), which lists education, skills and employment history.
  - A Needs Assessment that identifies basic and job skill needs. Some programs are provided at the Center or the plant site, while others are offered elsewhere. This assessment also determines whether the individual needs high school GED (General Educational Development) or college/vocational education and assistance.
  - Self/Career Awareness Training, which includes a personal assessment, is offered to provide information regarding the current market and the various skills needed.
  - Career Decision-Making, led by career counselors and peer counselors, is offered to help workers make decisions about career options.
  - Basic Skill Training is provided on or off the site for those who need to upgrade reading, writing and math skills.
- Referrals are made as appropriate to various agencies, such as social service, financial, marital and substance abuse.

- Workers are provided referrals to such training and unemployment compensation programs as: Tuition Assistance Plan (TAP), which is used to complete high school, enhance personal or job skills and enroll in college or vocational schools; company and other available benefits; and family and personal support services.

Assistance in post-layoff training and placement consists of:

- Outreach to those who have been or will be laid off.
- Intake, registration, and determination of eligibility based on JTPA Title III funds.
- Employability assessment, using the employability development plans to record information and to identify barriers.
- Referral to community agencies for family-oriented needs.
- Personal and vocational counseling on both an individual and group basis.
- Job Search Skills Workshop, which includes the job club and the development of employment skills.
- Classroom training, which is offered for demand occupations through condensed curricula so that intensive short-term training can be provided while workers are still eligible for benefits.
- Job development and placement services, which include job matching and placement, classroom training and placement, and on-the-job training and placement.
- Supportive services comprised of health care, child care, transportation, and legal and financial services.
- Relocation services for workers who are able to find employment that requires them to move away from the community.

While Frostburg's plant closing was announced, the same employer announced another closing in a city approximately 30 miles away. Therefore, the Center's location is designed to provide service to workers from both plant closings. Several months passed between the time of the announced plant closings and the actual on-site development of the Center. During this time, there was a great deal of uncertainty, frustration and confusion. At one plant the workers were laid-off and then later called back. Workers heard rumors of buyouts and many expected some sort of political miracle that would prevent the plants from being closed.

Of special interest is the development of a consortium of colleges and vocational schools to provide service to the dislocated workers. A voluntarily-developed organization was established, specifically in response to the plant closings. While some of the members have been contacted for specific assistance, the consortium itself has not been able to interact with the Center in a formal way.

Assessment

On the positive side, program participants agreed that the PIC's success in safeguarding workers' unemployment compensation benefits, by enrolling them in a self-directed job search program, was one of the most noteworthy aspects of this project. Most of those people who were interviewed also agreed that workers were kept informed throughout the process—with a hot-line, written information and newsletters that provided weekly updates on employment and training opportunities.

In contrast, several problems were cited by interviewees. Most notably:

- Local PICs and SDAs had little involvement in the development or implementation of the program. Their role was virtually limited to the processing of requests for financial assistance.
- Communication among local groups and organizations was almost non-existent. PICs, SDA officials and representatives of the community's educational institutions and programs felt excluded from the initial planning activities, as management and union representatives proceeded independently to establish and carry out the program.
- Without information about what company and union officials were doing—what programs were being established and how funds would be spent—many local groups and organizations were forced to wait for weeks, unable to determine how they could assist in the effort to find jobs and provide services to dislocated workers. This delay contributed to a growing sense of frustration within the community, and it limited the contribution that these local organizations could make to the employment and training program.
- Service providers were handicapped by the absence of a final closing date and a layoff list. Their efforts to provide services to a defined target population were made difficult by company actions which laid workers off, only to recall them later. Once laid off, workers enrolled in a job retraining program. Then those programs would be abandoned when workers were called back.

CASE STUDY #6: BUCKEYE

Buckeye's multi-county, multi-SDA dislocated worker project was developed to provide services to those affected by the decline of a single industry. Between 1977 to 1987, approximately 12,000 workers lost employment within this industry, which had dominated the region's economy for decades.

But the effects of this industry were not limited to economics. A way of life had evolved from work in this industry—and that way of life had lasted for generations. The workers of Buckeye and its surrounding counties sought jobs in this industry because the pay was good and because their fathers and their fathers' fathers had worked in it too. Whole families and communities based their livelihood on the economic well-being of this one industry.

Buckeye's dislocated workers varied in age, and their salaries averaged $30,000 a year. Educational backgrounds varied, although most had not gone beyond a high school diploma. Not surprisingly, most of the dislocated workers did not want to leave the area, even though a substantial number of them had exhausted their unemployment compensation benefits.

Buckeye's multi-year project began with a series of meetings in 1984—attended by a broad-based group of concerned citizens. Recognizing that lay-offs were likely to continue, and that industry representatives generally provided no more than 24-hour notice on such lay-offs, the initial Steering Committee targeted those dislocated workers who had exhausted their unemployment compensation benefits, as well as others who would face barriers to employment.

This Steering Committee represented three SDAs & PICs, state and local governments, the union and industry, numerous community-based organizations, and education and economic development organizations. JTP-Ohio provided the services of a professional job training planner, who acted as a consultant to the group. This individual helped the committee write grant proposals and select the prime contractor for the dislocated worker program.

The committee developed guidelines for the selection of the primary grant recipient, reviewed and approved proposals submitted to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor, provided program oversight, approved guidelines for the contracting with sub-recipients, established performance standards, and continually sought additional funding to continue the program.

An in-depth profile of the dislocated worker was developed in order to identify his/her needs, clarify goals, and to devise a mechanism for measuring the effectiveness of the program. Steering Committee members accepted specific areas of responsibility:

PICs/SDAs	Maintain contacts with the private sector and JTPA programs; provide employment and training expertise.
Union	Provide staff; maintain on-going contact with the workers; assist with outreach activities and public relations efforts and the development of the workers' profiles; and provide sites for orientation sessions.
Community Organizations	Provide counseling for affected workers and families; provide orientation sites.
Colleges	Provide training and orientation sites.
Industry	Compile a listing of workers and a referral of non-union workers; and provide information on public policy decisions affecting the industry.
Economic Development Groups	Coordinate the use of OJT dollars and their own funds in order to attract businesses and development, help coordinate training with hiring needs; and assist in the development of entrepreneurial training programs.
Prime Contractor	Establish linkages with social service agencies.

The planning phase took approximately six months. Much time was spent determining who was to be the prime contractor and how the program was to be structured. A private, non-profit organization with a background in providing job training service in the multi-county area was selected as the grant recipient.

The prime contractor's strength lay not only in its background. Instead, its primary advantage

was that it was not connected to any of the groups involved in the project. The primary contractor was free to go beyond traditional boundaries and "turf issues," and to devise a program that focused totally on providing the best possible services to workers. It was also free to pull contracts away from sub-contractors who were not meeting performance criteria.

A second key decision was the hiring of dislocated workers to assist in the service delivery itself. As a group, these individuals were highly motivated and readily accepted by other dislocated workers. They were a known quantity and could relate to workers in need of service, without threatening their self-esteem.

In the spring of 1985, initial funding of $975,000 was obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor's Discretionary Dislocated Worker Fund to provide services to 600 workers. JTP-Ohio Title III Discretionary Funds provided $275,000 for 200 participants, and another $625,000 for services to 500 dislocated workers. Approximately $635,700 in non-federal matching funds and in-kind contributions were also obtained.

Funding was allocated to counties according to their numbers of dislocated workers. Twenty-five percent of the funds were held back for those counties where the demand exceeded the original allocation formula. In counties where large numbers of dislocated workers were located, a subcontract for service was negotiated; where there were too few workers, a mobile office provided services.

Union employees received letters from their union, informing them of orientation times and locations. Press releases, public service announcements and posters were used in an effort to reach non-union workers.

Selected dislocated workers were recruited and given information about specific services that were available. They were instructed on how to refer workers for enrollment into the program, and on how to link workers with special problems to community service agencies. All dislocated workers received a handbook listing available community services, educational and training options, and federal, state and local programs. Generally, intake and referral were handled by the local OBES office.

All county programs included enrollment, career counseling and assessment, outreach services, classroom training, on-the-job training (OJT), job club, and job search and placement.

Six training alternatives have been implemented: (1) job placement without training, through grant recipients' out-placement efforts; (2) OJT through local JTPA and employers; (3) class size training* by local educational institutions; (4) individual training with area training facilities; (5) remedial education programs; and (6) GED basic literacy classes.

Because of the region's depressed nature, less than 10 percent of the workers achieved a job paying a wage comparable to what they had previously received. However, the program is considered one of the top two in the entire state in that its service and placement rates are outstanding. It has excelled in identifying and providing short-term retraining and on-the-job training.

Experience has shown that less than half of the workers would want, need, or be in a financial position to choose skill training or education. For those that did, they could choose between two-year technical degree training, less than class size training or education classes, and on-the-job training.

Buckeye's program has been particularly sensitive to the negative aspect of training people for work that does not exist. As a result, most of the training has been purchased on a less-than-class size or "slot-in" basis.

According to most project participants, Buckeye's experience has been extremely successful for a variety of reasons. Most importantly,

- It has had a broad base of support from all segments of the affected communities.
- Steering Committee members have taken the time to determine whom they are serving, what kind of educational/skill backgrounds they have, and what services will best meet their needs.
- The primary grant receipient was not tied to any of the established groups, and therefore has been free to provide a service network that can most effectively and efficiently deliver services.
- Displaced workers were hired to help run the program—thus creating an effective link between service providers and service recipients.

In the words of one service provider, the key to Buckeye's training and employment project has been: "This program is not a handout. It's a way out." And this "way out" continues to serve the needs of Buckeye's dislocated workers. In 1987, a third request of $1,250,000 was made to the U.S. Department of Labor to provide services for 1,000 participants, beginning in April, 1988. The program is still waiting for a response to this latest application.

The need for such services also continues. The multi-county area's unemployment rate presently ranges from 6.7 percent to 18.9 percent. Statewide, Ohio's unemployment rate is currently 6.9 percent.

Assessment

Buckeye's project has the second highest placement rate in the State of Ohio. In large part, this superior performance can be attributed to:

- Broad-based, strong political and community support;
- A strong research effort, which gave project participants an accurate profile of Buckeye's dislocated workers — and a good understanding of the trends that had eliminated their jobs;
- The involvement of dislocated workers in the implementation of the project;
- The tailoring of project services to the needs of specific workers (that is, the project was developed for a specific set of workers; it did not involve the adapation of a program that had been originally developed for another purpose);
- The active participation and support of organized labor; and
- The program director's independence from particular factors within the community — thus his ability to make decisions that were in the best interests of Buckeye's dislocated workers.

On the negative side, program participants cited a shortage of dollars. In most instances, there have been more workers to be served than dollars to serve them. This has been particularly true with respect to OJT dollars.

Other concerns that were identified by several participants were:

- Too often, people were not aware of the program and the services that were available;
- Many workers were prevented from participating in the program by the trauma experienced when they found themselves unemployed;
- Some companies gave only 24 hours notice before laying off employees — thus eliminating opportunities for services to be provided before the onset of unemployment; and
- Most important, funds were not available to support clients throughout the educational or job training cycle; therefore, too heavy a reliance was placed upon short-term job training projects.

*The term "class size training" denotes training of a group of individuals in a class planned for them, as opposed to "less-than-class size" or "slot-in training" in which an individual to be trained is placed in an existing training program.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings and recommendations of this study are the outgrowth of both positive and negative experiences identified through the six case studies and related interviews. These findings and recommendations are organized under three headings: (A) Advance Notice and Early Intervention, (B) Planning and Coordinating Community Responses, and (C) Implementation Strategies. For additional insight regarding the outcomes of specific courses of action in the contexts in which they occurred, the reader is encouraged to read the case studies.

A. Advance Notice and Early Intervention

Often, businesses try to prevent the community and its employees from finding out about an anticipated plant closing until the last possible moment. They may do this for a variety of reasons, including a desire to avoid unfavorable community reactions, to prevent anticipated community pressure to maintain the plant, or to prevent feared product sabotage.

Whatever the reasons, the problem for the community is the same: without adequate notice, the community's ability to plan and carry out an effective retraining and out-placement program for dislocated workers is substantially reduced.

With advance notice, communities can develop early intervention strategies. If a minimum of six months advance notice is given, they can maximize workers' participation in training programs and prevent them from drifting into minimum wage employment -- or no employment at all.

With advance notice, communities can develop an accurate assessment of the situation — one upon which an effective response can be built. They can marshal the resources of local, state, and federal governments -- resources that are vital to any retraining and out-placement effort. Furthermore, they can take steps to ensure that their responses are well-planned and coordinated.

For several years, state and federal officials have debated the merits of legislation that would require businesses to provide advance notice of plant closings. As recently as April, 1988, the U.S. Congress included such a provision in a trade bill that passed by wide margins in both houses of the Congress, but was subsequently vetoed by the President. This has been and continues to be a highly volatile issue -- and it is doubtful that either the federal government or the State of Ohio will enact such legislation in the foreseeable future. As a result, communities must depend upon their ability to persuade local businesses to give advance notice, or upon the ability of unions to have such requirements added to their contracts.

Therefore, it is recommended:

RECOMMENDATION A-1: SDAs, PICs, secondary and postsecondary vocational-technical institutions and JTP-Ohio should be more assertive in "marketing" their services to the business community. They should develop strategies designed to increase businesses' familiarity with the assistance and services available through the local job training and employment network.

RECOMMENDATION A-2: SDAs, PICs, secondary and postsecondary vocational-technical institutions and JTP-Ohio should be more assertive in encouraging businesses to provide advance notice of impending plant closures. They should also be more pro-active in their efforts to identify companies that might close plants in the foreseeable future -- and to encourage these companies to make use of the network's resources.

RECOMMENDATION A-3: Once notice of a plant closure has been given, initial orientation sessions and the provision of retraining and out-placement services should begin as soon as possible -- before the plant is closed. Efforts should be made to minimize the time between announcement of the plant closing and the initiation of services.

RECOMMENDATION A-4: Initial services should be provided on-site, if possible. Once the plant is closed, services should be located conveniently to encourage worker participation in the program; and spouses and other family members should be included in the informational meetings.

B. Planning and Coordinating Community Responses

There are eight elements that are basic to all dislocated worker programs. These are:

- A mechanism for determining the eligibility of dislocated workers;
- Surveys and assessments designed to provide worker profiles, labor market information, and information about the availability of education and training resources;
- An assessment of worker skills and of the need for vocational and career counseling;
- Individual counseling and referral services, including psychological and financial counseling and social service referrals;
- Job clubs, which include self-directed job searches;
- Job development activities, which identify job openings and OJT opportunities and which promote potential workers to employers;
- Relocation assistance programs, where improved employment prospects require moving out of the area; and
- Training and education programs, which include occupational retraining, the General Educational Development (GED) test, and short- and long-term training.

The community experiences outlined in this report support the view that the advanced planning and coordination of these activities is the most critical element of any program. Only through such planning and coordination can a community use its Title III funds and other resources effectively. Yet, the planning that goes into what is included in each program, and how those services are offered to dislocated workers, will vary among communities.

It is critical that community responses be tailored to the peculiarities of each plant closing. No two plant closings are identical — and therefore, each response must be individually designed. And yet, there are planning and coordination elements that should be part of any community response.

The experiences reported here give us considerable guidance in the search for their common planning and coordination elements:

- Community responses that are designed and carried out without the involvement of PIC and SDA representatives cannot access all of the available resources. Even where companies have chosen to create their own retraining and out-placement programs, often at considerable expense and with the best of motives, the community response has been less than satisfactory as the resources and coordinating capabilities of JTP-Ohio, SDAs and PICs have been bypassed.

- Effective planning and coordination require the involvement of all major actors: company management, workers/union representatives, SDAs, civic leaders, service providers, administrators of vocational-technical institutions, and job-training specialists.

- Effective planning and coordination are not possible without the identification of a single group of individuals who are jointly responsible for directing the community's response.

- Effective planning and coordination are not enhanced by a single organization's (i.e., the company, or a labor union) dominance of the program. Where all community organizations are not participating, the quantity and quality of services suffer.

- The involvement of an independent, professional program administrator — someone who can make an unbiased appraisal of the situation and who is experienced in job training programs — can enhance a community's ability to plan and implement an effective program.

Therefore, it is recommended:

RECOMMENDATION B-1: One of the first tasks of any community facing a plant closing should be to establish a single Steering Committee to plan and coordinate all aspects of a dislocated worker program. This Steering Committee should include representatives of the company management, workers/union, service providers, civic leaders, and representatives of the local education community (i.e., colleges and universities, vocational education programs, and public school officials). The Steering Committee should assign specific tasks to its members, and it should meet on a regular basis.

RECOMMENDATION B-2: The Steering Committee should choose a program administrator who has lead responsibility for evaluating, selecting and developing an effective service delivery mechanism for the program. (The Community Economic Assistance Team at the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services can help communities identify such individuals.)

RECOMMENDATION B-3: All assessment and survey activities should be conducted with a professionally designed and tested research instrument. Such an approach is required to generate accurate, reliable information — and to ensure that all workers, regardless of their educational level, can understand and respond to the questions being asked.

C. Implementation Strategies

Several elements of the implementation strategy merit attention. Most importantly, this study has demonstrated that:

- Services provided at or near the plant will generate the best response from workers. In part, this reflects their familiarity with the surroundings, and it speaks to the importance of convenience.

- Services offered in intimidating environments will not maximize worker participation. Often, classroom settings on college campuses will intimidate workers who are not accustomed to such surroundings. In contrast, an empty store in a conveniently located shopping center can be more "comfortable," and would therefore attract a larger number of workers.

- The involvement of dislocated workers in the delivery of services can increase worker enthusiasm and participation in the program. Communities that have used this approach report that dislocated workers are among their most highly motivated service providers. They also relate well to those who are being served, since they share the emotions and perspectives of dislocated workers.

- Continuing efforts to maintain contact with dislocated workers are critical. Very frequently, some of the information needed by dislocated workers is not available during the initial orientation meetings at the plant site. Also, some workers do not involve themselves in the initial sessions, and thus lack important information when they join the program at a later time. Therefore, a continuing flow of information must be maintained. For unionized workers, contact is often facilitated through union newsletters and other established mechanisms. For non-union workers, a new process must often be developed.

Therefore, the recommendations pertaining to implementation strategies are as follows:

RECOMMENDATION C-1: Wherever possible, dislocated workers should be hired to assist in the delivery of services.

RECOMMENDATION C-2: Services should be offered in convenient locations and in environments that do not intimidate workers.

RECOMMENDATION C-3: The Steering Committee should be actively involved in reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the program. Its members should be encouraged to help in the identification of problems, the review of available options, and the selection of new implementation strategies.

RECOMMENDATION C-4: Mechanisms should be developed to maintain continuing contact with dislocated workers. This contact can take one or more of several forms, including periodic newsletters, telephone hot-lines, worker meetings, and the like.

RECOMMENDATION C-5: Services should be available for a full year after the closing of the plant. Only through such a commitment can a community meet the employment, education and training, social, and personal needs of dislocated workers.

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* A number of site-specific reports and documents were reviewed by the researcher during the course of this study. However, in the interest of confidentiality, these reports have not been cited.

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